


THE MIN SHENG: A STUDY IN CHINESE DEMOCRACY

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The Tenth Morrison Lecture

The tenth annual Morrison Lecture was delivered at the Australian Institute of Anatomy on Thursday, 5th June, 1941.

The lecturer was Dr. W.G. Goddard, President of the China Society of Australia.

A large number of telegrams and good wishes were received, including those from the Chinese Vice-Consul, Sydney; the Chinese Vice-Consul, Melbourne; the China Society of Australia; Mar Leong Wah; D.Y. Narme, and William Liu.

The Chairman was Sir Robert Garran. A vote of thanks to the speaker was moved by Canon Edwards and seconded by Dr. Pao, Consul-General for the Republic of China.

Address

I am most happy to have this opportunity to speak to you of China. For many years, China has been my teacher. When I first met her, she took my hand and guided me to chambers of knowledge, of which I had never even heard in the schools of the West. She was ever so patient, as she explained and interpreted on the way. This evening, though far from her shores and her shrines, I still hear her voice, clear as crystal, like the temple bells of Mount Omi at dawn.

When I was invited to deliver this Morrison Memorial Lecture, my chief difficulty was in the choice of a subject. China is so extensive. Her wisdom is so profound. Then I remembered that here in Australia men are speaking and writing of post-war democracy, what it must be, and how it must function. On all sides and in all places this is the topic of their discussion. I knew, then, that China had a message for Australia. So I decided to speak to you of Chinese Democracy and its contribution to the world of tomorrow, believing, as I do, that the renaissance of the future will arise from the study and understanding of Chinese culture. Our subject, then, is Chinese Democracy. But we must begin at the beginning.

Chu Hsi, the famous Sung philosopher, in his commentary on *Ta Hsiao*, one of the Confucian classics, made this observation: "*By long application of our powers, we one day reach a point, whence we see the whole scheme of things spread out before us, and we perceive the realities behind all phenomena, the relation of accident to essence, and the workings of the human mind*". In these words, Chu Hsi enunciated the fundamental Chinese conception of the *wholeness of things*, a truth that is largely absent from our Western philosophies of life. In our examination of Chinese Democracy, it is essential that we see this principle clearly, as Chinese Democracy is the political and economic application of it.

We of the West have sectionalized life. The truth of the *wholeness of things* has escaped us. We have divided life into separate compartments, each presided over by a science with an imposing name. We do not see life as a whole. We separate art from letters and both from politics. We never dream that the poet might be the soundest economist, and the artist the wisest statesman. We have not yet learnt the fundamental truth of the *wholeness of things* as referred to by the Chinese philosopher. And yet, is it not reasonable to assume that there must be some uniform principle in all spheres of activity, the knowledge of which will lead to fullness of life?

It might be interesting, in our private reflections, to discover just how far our failure to grasp such a principle is related to the threatened disintegration of Western civilization. We must remember that it is the West and not China that has lost its bearings. However, I suggest to you, in passing, that our failure to grasp the fundamental truth of the *wholeness of things* has something to do with the danger of disintegration that lies behind the present struggle. Have we not refused to apply the moral law to economics? Is not this just one instance of our failure to understand the *wholeness of things*?

Chinese philosophers discovered such a principle long ago, with the result that all Chinese art, literature, and economics have become the expression of it. Chinese democracy is its latest expression. What is this principle?

It was enunciated in definite terms by Hsieh Ho, a philosopher-artist who lived in the days of the Southern Ch'i dynasty (A.D. 479–501). It had been glimpsed by Chinese before Hsieh Ho, but not clearly defined. Tsung Ping, of Honan Province, in his *Hua Shan Shui Su*, written in A.D. 440, saw it in outline. Wang Wei, of Lin-chi, in his *Su Hua*, had a clearer vision of it. But it remained for Hsieh Ho to give this principle definition. Hsieh Ho lived at Nanking in times much like our own. They were what the Chinese historians have called the "troubled years", when the country was rent with strife from within and invasion from without. The Tartars had sacked the ancient capital, leaving it in much the same state as some of the modern capitals have been left. One Chinese historian of the time has left us this description of the capital—

"At this time there were not left in the city of Ch'ang An more than one hundred families. Weeds and thorns grew thickly as in a forest. Only four carts could be found in all the capital. The officials had neither robes of ceremony nor seals. They used tablets of mulberry wood on which their names and rank were inscribed."

At Nanking, whither most of the scholars and officials had fled, an attempt was made to stem the melancholy of the times, and it is likely that Zen Buddhism exercised a powerful influence in bringing about the cultural revival, led by Hsieh Ho. He gathered around him many students and he was regarded as bringer of a new evangel to the nation. He embodied his teaching in his *Ku Hua P'in Lu*, and although this was primarily meant for artists, it defined the principle which was subsequently to be adopted generally. This principle was set forth in the words, "*ch'i yun sheng tung*". Hsieh Ho was the John Ruskin of his age, the artist-economist, and this key-phrase of his has been the inspiration of Chinese-reformers ever since. We must understand, then, the essential meaning of this phrase, if we are to grasp the meaning of Chinese democracy. Perhaps the clearest definition is that given by Liu Hai-su, founder of the Fine Arts School at Shanghai. This is as follows:—

"The word 'Ch'i' refers to spiritual sublimity. The word 'Yun' expresses the idea of rhythm. The words 'Sheng' and 'Tung' signify the movement of life. Thus, these four words, taken in combination, denote rhythmic vitality or rhythmic harmony in its relation to the whole of life."

On the basis of this interpretation, then, we translate the phrase as "*rhythmic vitality*", and this is the principle that underlies all Chinese art, letters, and economics. In all spheres of activity, the individual must seek to be in harmony with the larger life. He must seek "*rhythmic harmony*" with life, whether it be nature as in the case of the artist, or the community as in the case of the citizen. It reminds us of the words of Chiang Yee that "*all roads lead to the same goal at last—the rhythm of life*".

In this lecture, we propose to trace the operation of this principle in three of its most important spheres, as follows:—

1. Tung Sheng in Chinese art.
2. Hsieh Sheng in Chinese literature.
3. Min Sheng in Chinese economics.

We remind you that these are not separate. They are parts of the *wholeness of things*, three expressions of the one principle. The presence of the word “*Sheng*” in each links them to life, as this is the Chinese term for life. Chinese artist, Chinese man of letters, and Chinese economist, see life according to this principle. Hence the presence of so many Chinese scholars in the present Government of China at Chungking.

1. TUNG SHENG IN CHINESE ART

We remind you that the Chinese words “*Tung Sheng*” mean “life movement” as part of the rhythm of the universe. And does not this suggest the name of Wordsworth to us? We recall his lines—

*“Tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes”.*

This is the Chinese conception of “*Tung Sheng*”, which postulates that all nature lives and breathes and enjoys its place in the universal scheme. The mountain stream is alive, the tenderest blossom throbs with the joy of living, the grass that covers the hillside is part of the dynamic nature of the universe, and even the raindrops on the banana leaves add their music to the universal rhythm.

Back in the year A.D. 440 the Chinese artist Wang Wei had expressed the very same thought as is set forth in those lines of Wordsworth, when he wrote in his *Su Hua* these words: “*The spirit has no form; yet that which moves and vitalises the form is the spirit.*” In A.D. 1072 the great Sung artist Kuo Hsi expounded this conception in his monumental work, probably the greatest art book of any age or country. In this *Lin Ch'uan Kao Chih*, Kuo Hsi shows that the true rhythm of life can never be formulated, but it can be expressed, as for instance in the melody of a bird. He goes much further than this, and interprets this rhythm as the creative principle of life. As he himself put it: “*Before taking up the brush, the artist must feel his heart beating beside that of Nature; he must be conscious of sharing in her creative acts. His work then be full of rhythmic vitality*”. Anybody who has studied the great hanging scroll, *Early Spring* (Tsao Ch'un), painted by this artist in A.D. 1072, must have realised the full import of these words. This masterpiece used to hang in the Palace Museum at Peiping. We wonder what its fate has been?

Among our reproductions of Chinese paintings, we have one of this great masterpiece, and the more we study it, the greater becomes the contrast between it and the landscapes of the European artists. The Alpine

clouds of Titian, the calm and watered meadows of Constable, the fierce grandeur of Turner's seas, the bewitching twilights of Whistler and the vivid atmosphere of Cezanne, seize us with their magic, but they fail to whisper in our ears that untranslatable something that Kuo Hsi called the "*fellowship of life*". They attract, but they do not guide. They are ever so beautiful and true to Nature, but they are not a gospel. There is not one evangelistic note about them all. They are on the canvas and there they will remain for all time.

But how different the thin silky clouds of Kuo Hsi! Each faint cloud-stroke is instinct with meaning and suggestive of something behind it. Each pine-needle provokes a questioning in the mind and is symbolic of something felt but not seen. Everywhere it is the message of "*Tung Sheng*". The persistent impression is one of life. Some morning, we shall not be surprised, if, when we look at this silk, the clouds shall have rolled away, and the full glory of the ultimate truth shall be revealed in all its glory, with those pine trees as the pillars of the City of God. The artist of the West is detached from the philosophy of his people and he has always aimed at reproduction of Nature. The Chinese artist, on the other hand, has always been a philosopher, expressing his philosophy of life in his art. As such, he has been an interpreter of life. As Lao Tzu once expressed it: "*Man feels the workings of the Universal Spirit in companionship with mountains and streams, clouds and mists, stones and trees.*" These might be objects for the brush of the artist of the West, but never companions.

This "*Tung Sheng*" as expressed by Chinese artists has well been set forth by Chiang Yee in these words—

"Civilization makes it hard for us to live by ourselves with the mere simplicity of a thoughtless plant, but however sophisticated the Chinese artist may be in his own contact with society, you will find that when he takes up the brush to paint, he will more readily choose an insect perched on a twig, a raven on a moonlit pine, a simple lotus plant springing from a pool, than any complicated scene of human relationships; moreover he will approach his subject in the altitude of the Taoist sage, putting aside knowledge, and seeking for that Spirit, which is an intrinsic part of all living things from their birth".

It is not surprising, then, to find Chinese artists referring to their work as "*Ch'uan Shen*", meaning "Transmission of Spirit". Ching Hao, who lived during the closing years of the Tang Dynasty, was fond of this phrase to express his landscapes, which were in reality representations of space. To artists of the West, space means little. It suggests emptiness and void. To Ching Ho, on the other hand, and to most Chinese artists, space was the home of the liberated spirit, where it unites with the Eternal Spirit. Ching Ho lived on the side of a range, known as the T'ai-hung Mountains, from which he was able to survey the surrounding country for many miles. Here

he painted his landscapes and wrote his *Pi Fa Chi*, in which he set forth his principles for painting mountains so as to “*become one with them and the great space of which they are the counterpart*”. In this work, he includes a few poems of his own composing, to go with his landscapes. One of these indicates his philosophy of space and its relation to the universal life. It closes with these words—

“*When the breeze ceases, think not that it has vanished.
Its beautiful music is stored, in the sky.*”

Such then was the “*Tung Sheng*” as set forth in Chinese art, the “*Life Movement*” that made artist and the universe one, the rhythmic vitality of which man, bird, beast, flower, insect, mountain, stream, and plain were parts, blending in one divine unison.

2. HSIEH SHENG IN CHINESE LITERATURE

We remind you that the phrase *Hsieh Sheng* means “writing life” as part of the universal rhythm. A Chinese writer—Chiang Yee, I think—once wrote that “*poet and painter walk together and in the movement of their sympathies reach the place where they lose their identity and become one with the Great Spirit of the Universe*”. This was just another way of saying that art and literature are movements in the rhythm of life. Both are expressions of rhythmic vitality.

The Chinese written character is a striking illustration of this. It suggests movement, rhythmical movement. The written characters of our Western languages are dead. The only meaning they have is the result of the association of ideas. Chinese written characters are instinct with both movement and meaning.

Chiang Ho once said that “*every movement of ink and brush is an adventure in rhythmic movement*”, and his meaning is clear to any student of Chinese calligraphy. These adventures range over an area as wide as nature herself. One writer will study the springing form of the greyhound to learn its curves. Another will prefer the grace of the willow of pine tree. Others, again, will master the attitude of two fighting snakes or spend hours in studying the rhythm of rocks. From all these and a thousand more they have gained the inspiration of movement and the invitation to join the universal rhythm. As we examine Chinese writing, especially that of the masters, we see all these forms represented in the strokes and curves. Shang Tun-fu, in his great classic on the subject, draws attention to the *ts'aosbu* or “grass-script”, which developed from speed in writing. He compared it to a dancer and many Chinese now refer to this running script as “dancing on paper”. Here, again, we have the idea of rhythmic harmony. Pao Shih-chen, another authority on the subject, compared the poet painting his poem to “*Hsi K'ang striking the notes of the 'Tung-wu' melody from his lute*”. Hsi K'ang was a famous musician and lute-maker of

the Wei Dynasty and the "*Tung-wu*" melody was one of his masterpieces. In this comparison, Pao Shih-chen saw both poet and musician under the one spell. The only difference was in expression. The musician used sounds from his lute, the poet used written characters from his brush. But both expressed the rhythm of things.

It is not surprising, then, that Chinese literature, formed of these written characters, is instinct with rhythmic vitality. Again, we remind you that *Hsieh Sheng* means "writing life". We of the West write about life. We describe it. The Chinese write life as the artist paints it. Both are part of it. They are not onlookers. And this applies to every section of Chinese literature.

Time will not permit of any lengthy treatment of Chinese literature as the expression of *Hsieh Sheng*, but a few illustrations may be noted. The first illustration is the Chinese poem. Now, it is absolutely impossible to read a Chinese poem as we would read a poem from an author of the West. In order to understand the Chinese poem, we must visualize the world behind it, and bring ourselves into harmony with that world. We must place ourselves in the same attitude as when studying a Chinese painting. For instance, Wang Wei, the great Tang poet, wrote—

*"One night of rain in the mountains,
A hundred fountains in the tree-tops".*

Behind this lies the vision of mountain streams rushing down into the wooded valley and almost covering the trees. A moment's thought over these lines and we shall see that the poet wrote them as the painter would paint the scene. He was "writing life". But probably the *Nocturnes* of Li Po, the greatest of all Chinese poets, will provide even a more expressive illustration. Here is one of these—

*"Blue water . . . Clear moon.
White herons flying in the moonlight.
Chestnut-gatherers are going home.
Listen! Do you hear them singing?"*

When P'u Sung-ling, the Shantung scholar of the XVII century, first read this poem, he exclaimed, "*The last line was not needed*". Of course not—it was the natural sequence. The reader of this poem, like Li Po when he first composed it, is part of the scene. Hence he can hear the singing as a matter of course.

Our next illustration is that collection of letters written by Cheng Hsieh during the period 1760–1763. We would rank these among the greatest literature of all time. We know of no letters in our English or any other language to compare with them. In them, Cheng Hsieh describes life in the Chinese countryside and himself as part of it. He is akin to the bamboos and the trees and the flowers. He is part of the "*red glow of the*

morning and of the sunset" as he puts it, reminding us of those words in Shakespeare's sonnet—

*"In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the West ..."*

In one of these letters, Cheng Hsieh wrote thus—

"One day we put aside all our books and fold up all our paintings. Then we go out into the fields where the water gurgles beside the willows. There we stand and look up to the distant mountains. As we stand there, the mountains above, the trees around, and the water beneath, we feel that we are in harmony with life and have learnt at last the ultimate truth. What more profound knowledge can we gain?"

The last illustration is the Chinese novel, as typified in the *Hung Lou Meng* of Tsao Hsueh-chin. This great masterpiece has for nearly 200 years been the prophecy of the ideal Chinese community. The 421 characters who move through the pages of this great novel of Tsao Hsueh-chin are all typical Chinese.

The title *Hung Lou Meng* means literally "Dream of the Red Two Story Building". It recounts the experiences of the different members of this community, and beneath the superb artistry of style and language there is the seething spirit of revolt against the existing order of things. We see in Tsao Hsueh-chin the revolutionary, striving to bring the community into *rhythmic harmony* with truth and justice. It is generally agreed that this work is autobiographical, and, as such, it sets forth the author's conception of the community as the embodiment of the highest principles of truth and justice. The section dealing with the dream of Pao-Yu shows this clearly. Here is an extract from that section—

"Before he knew what had happened Pao-Yu fell asleep. It seemed to him that he was in a great flower-garden, which was remarkably like his own garden. Through the garden he went into a courtyard which seemed familiar. He went up some steps and entered a room. And all the time he wondered, 'Can there be another mansion so like my own?'

"But there were some things that were different. These made Pao-Yu think seriously. He asked himself, 'Should we not change the manners of our mansion so that it might be more like this, which is perfect?'

"Pao-Yu saw a boy lying on the bed in the room which he had entered. He was sighing. Seeing him, the boy on the bed rose and embraced him, saying, 'so you are Pao-Yu and it was not a dream!' 'No, indeed,' said Pao-Yu. It was truth."

Tsao Hsueh-chin designed this imagery to convey the truth that the community must be fashioned and directed in accordance with the highest truths. In other words, the life of the community must be lived in *rhyth-*

mic harmony with truth and justice. In his novel he calls this “*the jade of spiritual understanding*”.

3. MIN SHENG IN CHINESE ECONOMICS

We come now to the most important aspect of our study. We have seen this principle of “rhythmic vitality” expressing itself as *Tung Sheng* in Chinese art and as *Hsieh Sheng* in Chinese letters. We are now to examine its assertion as *Min Sheng* in Chinese democracy.

Literally, this phrase *Min Sheng* means the “livelihood of the people”. Most students know that certain features of Chinese life have always been democratic. In some respects, we might call China the oldest democracy in the world. China never had any social caste or aristocracy. China never had a permanent landed class as in Europe. The examination system, set up by Emperor Tang T'ai Tsung in A.D. 630, offered opportunity for even the poorest to qualify for the civil service and the mandarinat. During thirteen centuries this examination system operated in China, and every candidate for civil or political office was required to pass the tests. Neither birth nor wealth could obviate this necessity.

In the sphere of economic democracy, however, progress was slower. Through the centuries, prophets arose in China, who urged the application of this principle of “rhythmic vitality” to economics. They pointed out that economic individualism was the chief obstacle. They went further and attacked the profit-making motive as the urge to economic individualism. They viewed this profit-making motive as the artist saw the blot on the landscape and as the poet heard the discord of the misplaced word. They saw it as ugliness. The profit-making motive destroyed “rhythmic vitality”. All these Chinese seers agreed that this profit-making motive disturbed the harmony of the community and finally led to its disintegration. It was this artistic approach to the problem that led Yao Hsin-nung to speak of the “*poetry of economics*”, and not, as with us, the science of economics. Confucius was the first of these Chinese seers, who viewed this profit-making motive as disruptive of the harmony of the community. When he was appointed governor of a district in the State of Lu, his first decree was a fixation of profits. History records that the decree was rigidly enforced. History also records that other States sent missions to Confucius to seek his advice. Evidently his district enjoyed a commendable reputation. After Confucius we have Mencius in this great company of Chinese prophets. In *Meng Tzu* we read the following:—

“Mencius went to see King Hwuy of Leang.

“The King said: ‘Venerable Sir, since you have not counted it far to come here, a distance of a thousand li, may I presume that you are likewise provided with counsels to profit my kingdom?’

"Mencius replied: Why must your Majesty use that word 'profit'? What I am likewise provided with are counsels to benevolence and righteousness, and these are my only topics'."

Mencius then went on to point out how this profit motive destroys, not only the harmony of the community, but endangers the very existence of the community itself. Mencius was the first to warn the human community of the dangers of the monopoly. We continue from Meng Tzu—

"Mencius said to the King: 'If your Majesty say "What is to be done to profit my kingdom?" the great officers will say "What is to be done to profit our families?" and the inferior officers and the common people will say "What is to be done to profit our persons?" Superiors and inferiors will try to snatch this profit, one from the other, and the kingdom will be endangered. But, if righteousness be put first, there will be no such danger. If profit be put first, then none will be satisfied without making an attempt to seize all."

Mencius meant this principle to be applied to the conduct of the community as a whole. It was the basis of his conception of a sound economy. In a later conversation with this same King Hwuy of Leang, Mencius said, *"Is there any difference between killing a man with a stick and with a sword?"* To this question the King answered, *"There is no difference"*. *"Is there any difference between doing it with a sword and with a form of government?"* Again the King answered *"There is no difference"*. It is clear how the mind of Mencius was working. He saw in the monopoly not only the unhappiness of the community, but the threatened disintegration of the community. Mencius was simply unfolding and applying the basic conception of Confucius. We read in the *Lun Yu* that *"the Master did not believe in gain, but pointed out that the cultured man knows the importance of righteousness, while the uncultured man knows only the meaning of profit"*.

It is evident, then, that the principle that inspired Dr. Sun Yat-sen was not new to Chinese thought. On the contrary, it was in keeping with those fundamental truths that the earliest philosophers of China had taught. And it is important to note that both Confucius and Mencius emphasized the relation of the individual to the community. Both stressed the truth that the profit-motive separates the individual from the community and becomes the real cause of personal unrest and national disturbance.

We see here the emergence of that truth, which was emphasized as *Tung Sheng* by the Chinese artist and as *Hsieh Sheng* by the Chinese poet. Nature, the community, life itself, were the ultimates, of which the individual should form an obedient part, and in the being of which he should form a part. From the very foundation of the Chinese community this principle was glimpsed, even if not clearly seen, and through the subsequent ages wise men sought to fashion the national economy in

obedience to this principle.

From Mencius (B.C. 372–289) we pass over the centuries to Wang An-shih, who was the chief minister to the Sung Emperor Shen Tsung in A.D. 1067. This Chinese reformer determined to put into effect this very principle from the day he assumed office at the Court of Kaifeng. For many years he had studied the condition of the peasantry. This examination had convinced him that the profit-motive on the part of the money-lenders and the land-owners was the real cause of the plight of the peasantry. When he assumed office, he won over the Emperor to his way of thinking, and was given authority to introduce remedial legislation. He seems to have been guided in his economic programme by two convictions. These were—

1. The individual must find his life in a great community plan.
2. This cannot be done under a profit-making system.

These convictions were embodied in two laws introduced by Wang An-shih. These were known as the “*Young Shoots*” and “*Limitation of Profits*”, both of which were forerunners of legislation now recognized as essential in any democratic country.

The former of these laws, “*Young Shoots*”, provided for a loan to farmers in the spring, in proportion to the amount of land sown, and the loan was repayable with light interest at the harvest. The promotion of the best interests and comfort of the farmers rather than the small profit made by the State was the incentive behind this legislation. It was really a kind of land and credit bank.

The second of these laws, “*Limitation of Profits*” was a provision to fix prices and profits. Definite scales of permissible profits were drawn up and published. Speculation in land was rendered almost impossible. No attempt was made to abolish the profit system entirely, but it was kept within bounds. Registers of all land were compiled. The officers of each sub-prefecture (*hsien*) were responsible for these. The value of each property was set down in this register, together with the maximum price at which it could be sold.

Wang An-shih had to face much opposition. He resigned from office in A.D. 1076, and in A.D. 1086 his laws were repealed under orders from the Regency governing in the name of Emperor Che Tsung. The famous historian Ssu-ma Kuang had been his chief opponent and succeeded him in office. In the year when these laws were repealed, Wang An-shih died in Nanking. But his work had gripped the imagination of many of the younger scholars, with the result that in A.D. 1094 Emperor Che Tsung summoned one of these, Ts'ai Ching, and commanded him to enforce the laws of Wang An-shih again. These laws remained in operation till the Kins invaded the Empire and Emperor Hui Tsung with his court fled from Kaifeng, to Nanking. That was in A.D. 1125.

Wang An-shih was probably the greatest Chinese thinker since the day of Mencius, whose democratic principles had profoundly influenced him. He had a vision far ahead of his day, and much that is taking place in Free China to-day is the working-out of those very principles he so ardently believed in and fought for. Wang An-shih had to fight the financier and the reactionary. Together they destroyed him, but his gospel lived on, and its inspiration was destined to bear a rich harvest in later ages. But truth can never die nor its torch be entirely extinguished. Just as Wang An-shih had been enlightened by the teachings of Mencius, so the work of Wang An-shih was destined to be carried on by others. One of his most ardent disciples came from the Hung clan. It is interesting to note, then, that the next great exponent of Chinese democracy was Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, who was born in Kwangtung Province in A.D. 1813. This great Chinese reformer has not received just treatment at the hands of Western historians, whose criticism seems to have been blinded by prejudice and who have ignored the fundamental facts. Hung Hsiu-ch'uan was a convert to Christianity, having come under the influence of a Lutheran missionary in Canton. He conceived the idea of translating the Ten Commandments into social and economic terms. His campaign toward this end is known as the T'ai P'ing Movement. He himself called it "*T'ai P'ing T'ien Kua*" (Great Peaceful Heavenly Dynasty). He set up his capital at Nanking and his first proclamation was as follows:—

"All should strive to share the great happiness of the Heavenly Father. All shall have food. All shall have clothes. Money must be shared. No man shall be without food or warmth."

We would sum up the democratic programme of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan by quoting from our "*New Order in East Asia*", which we published last year. In that essay we said—

"The T'ai P'ings attempted to establish a Kingdom of God on the earth and to translate the Ten Commandments and the Christian ethic into political and economic terms. The vision of the community of goods that existed among the early Christians fired their Chinese imagination. The poor were to have their inheritance of food and land. The wealthy were to hand over for general enjoyment their ill-gotten gains. The appeal of such an economic programme to the Chinese masses, crushed and oppressed in unspeakable misery under the predatory landlord-official class, was tremendous."

It is not necessary to enter here into the causes that nullified this greatest democratic programme of the age. Sufficient to say that British guns, backing up the interests of the opium monopolists, determined that such a Kingdom of God should not be established. Even to this day, there are many sad memorials in China of the work of those guns. To those who may wish to read further into this deed of shame, we suggest

that they read the London *Times* of the period and the speeches of John Bright, Colonel Sykes in the House of Commons, as well as the despatches of British Consul Meadows, then at Shanghai, and Bishop Anderson, Anglican Bishop of Hongkong. These will carry their own conviction, which historians in their narrow and blinding prejudices have ignored.

The T'ai P'ing Movement, with its churches and its democratic programme, was destroyed, but it had inspired the Chinese with an impulse which was destined to burst forth in all its affluence in later years.

This brings us to Sun Yat-sen, whose interpretation of democracy is the inspiration of China to-day. We need not detail the stirring events of his career, his first attempt at revolution followed by years of exile, his flight to London, where he was kidnapped and hidden for twelve days, and his subsequent leadership of the *Tung Meng Hui* in Tokio and the birth of the republic in China.

It is, however, most important to note that Sun Yat-sen was born in the same province as Hung Hsiu-ch'uan and from his earliest years his imagination had been fired by the vision and work of that great leader. Again and again in his writings, Sun Yat-sen refers to Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, pointing out his greatness and emphasizing just where he failed. These things are not surprising when we remember that Sun Yat-sen's first teacher in the village of Hsiang-shan had been one of the ardent disciples of the T'ai P'ing himself. From this teacher, aged though he was at the time, the youthful scholar received much that was to guide him in later years.

In the year 1924 Sun Yat-sen delivered a series of lectures at Canton, which were later published under the title of *San Min Chu I*, meaning the Three Principles of the People. This work has since become the classic text of Chinese democracy, and, in our judgment, the clearest exposition of true democracy in any country or any language. The last of these three was called by Sun Yat-sen *Min Sheng*, or the Livelihood of the People, and it is to this principle that I would draw your attention, as it is an attempt to apply the *ch'i yun sheng tung* truth to economics and the daily life of the people.

Here, at last, we see artist, poet, and economist following the one great and all-absorbing inspiration. Here, at last, we grasp the fundamental unity of life. The painter and the politician, the poet and the economist, have become one. The *wholeness of life* has been regained. Truth has burst through the clouds that dimmed the philosophies of our Western thought. I have already pointed out that this Chinese conception of the *wholeness of things* and the principle underlying this are expressed in that phrase *ch'i yun sheng tung*, meaning rhythmic vitality. In other words, life lived in harmony with the spirit of the universe. Call this God if you wish. I have pointed out how Chinese artist and poet were inspired by this truth.

I now propose to show how Sun Yat-sen applied this truth to political and economic life.

In his exposition of Min Ch'uan, or the political rights of the people, he said—

“In the future, any nation which wants complete democracy must accord to its people the four rights of suffrage, recall, initiative, and referendum. If the people have the right to choose their officials, they should also have the right to initiate and amend the laws. This right of initiative and referendum are related to the enactment of laws.”

Just consider the difference between this conception of democracy and that which prevails here in Australia and in most other democracies. We still cling to the *individualistic* idea of democracy. We elect officials, but, once elected, those officials are no longer responsible to us. They do not seek our will on any matter till the next election. The community does not count. Our right ends with the election. Is this true democracy? Sun Yat-sen declared that it is not, and that the people should have the right to recall as well as elect. Is this not logical?

But this is not all. The constitution of China which embodies Sun Yat-sen's teaching and which will soon become operative provides the machinery for each division or electorate to express its will on matters to be discussed by the legislature, and the elected officials or members will simply state that will, and not their own private opinion. Is this not nearer a true democracy than our method? By this means, the will of the people and not that of the elected officials alone will be known. If the elected official fails to express the will of the community that elected him, then he can be recalled.

Now the principle underlying all this is that same principle as motivated the artist and the poet. It is simply rhythmic vitality. It is unison with the mind and will of the community, as opposed to that individualism that is the mark of so much of our so-called democracy.

Sun Yat-sen applied this same principle to the land question, maintaining that *all values created by the community should belong to the community*. Sun Yat-sen expressed it thus—

“Rise in land values should be credited to all the people. The landowner himself has nothing to do with the rise and fall. What is it that makes the value of his land rise? The improvements which other people make around his land and the competition which they carry on for possession of his land.”

He then proceeded to point out how a true democracy would deal with this problem. This is how he put his solution—

“What is our policy? We propose that the government shall buy back the land, if necessary, according to the amount of land tax and the price

of the land. How can the price of the land be determined? We would advocate the landowner himself fixing the price. The government can exercise two functions, the first being to collect taxes according to this declared value of the land, the second being to buy back the land at the declared price. If the landowner makes a low assessment, he will be afraid lest the government buy back his land at his own valuation; if he makes too high an assessment, he will be afraid of the government taxes according to that assessment. Consequently, the assessment will probably be according to the real value. After these land values have been fixed, we should have a law to the effect that all future increases in land values shall revert to the community, because such increases will be due to improvements made by the community. Accordingly, they should belong to the community."

Sun Yat-sen had very fixed views on this land question. Again and again he returns to it as the cardinal principle of *Min Sheng*. "*This proposal that all future increment shall be given to the community is the real Min Sheng principle,*" he affirms on several occasions. It is the principle that underlies Sun Yat-sen's entire conception of democracy. Service and not individual profit. Here we see that Chinese ethic which Mencius and Wang An-shih and Hung Hsiu-ch'uan had so earnestly proclaimed in other and earlier times. Here we see the application of *ch'i yun sheng tung* principle which had inspired such artists as Hsieh Ho and Wang Wei and Ching Hao to achieve their masterpieces now being applied to economics and the livelihood of the people. Community service and not individual gain. Is not this Christian ethic also?

However, before we pass on to note Sun Yat-sen's application of this same principle to industry, we would tabulate his proposed solution of that land problem as follows:—

1. The landowner makes his own valuation.
2. The government levies taxes on this valuation.
3. The government can buy the land at this valuation.
4. All increase in value of the land reverts to the community.

We suggest that this is real democracy.

And now we shall notice the application of this principle of rhythmic vitality to industry. This is known as the *co-operative movement* and its motive has been expressed by L.W. Chen, the Chinese economist, in these words—

"The co-operative movement is the most revolutionary of all movements; not in the sense of seeking a violent upheaval, but in that it aims at a complete alteration of the economic structure. It abolishes profit-making and makes consumption rather than production the test of national prosperity. This movement aims at a distribution of wealth, based not on ownership of capital or work done, but on human needs."

These words express Sun Yat-sen's conception of industry in a real democracy. We must remove from our minds the prevailing idea that this Chinese co-operative order is merely a war-time economy. These co-operatives have been called "guerrilla industries". This is entirely wrong and misleading. It fails to understand the Chinese philosophy. It ignores the trend of Chinese thought through the ages. Above all, it does not grasp that Chinese conception of "rhythmic vitality", which we have attempted to explain. The Chinese co-operative order is the application to industry of that principle which has inspired Chinese art and Chinese letters all through the ages. As the painter and the poet sought to bring himself into harmony with nature, so the co-operative order in industry is the means by which the worker tunes his life in rhythm with the community.

All through the ages the Chinese thinkers have pointed out that the chief hindrance to this was the operation of the profit motive. This profit motive, according to Chinese thought, has resulted in excessive individualism, thus preventing the rhythm of community life. As far back as B.C. 450, Confucius issued an order fixing prices and regulating profits. Mencius in B.C. 300 emphasised that profit-making was the disruptive element within the State. In A.D. 1067 Wang An-shih fixed prices and the scale of profits. Later in A.D. 1860 Hung Hsiu-Ch'uan established the T'ai-ping State, in which profits were regulated, and in which co-operation was the guiding principle. That was more than 80 years ago. In A.D. 1919 Sun Yat-sen urged the establishment of co-operative industries throughout the entire country. Definite beginnings were made as the result of decisions reached at the Second National Congress of the Kuomintang in 1926. In 1928 Chiang Kai-shek and Mr. Chen Kuo-fu drew up the co-operative programme. On 10th July, 1940, Dr. H.H. Kung, President of the Executive Yuan and President of the Industrial Co-operatives, used these words: "*Chinese industrial co-operatives are not merely a war-time organization. They are the basis of the new economy of China.*" It is definitely incorrect, then, to regard this Chinese co-operative order as merely a war-time measure. On the contrary, it is the economic expression of that principle that had inspired Chinese artists and men of letters through the centuries. It is simply *rhythmic vitality* in industrial terms.

It is not our purpose in this lecture to attempt a complete definition of this co-operative order. Our real object is to emphasize the principle that animates Chinese democracy. But we shall outline its salient features as they were set forth by Hsueh Hsien-chow in his memorandum, prepared for the Kuomintang Congress. These are as follows:—

1. All workers to be part-owners of the industries they work.
2. Service rather than profit-making to be the motive of industry.
3. Consumption and not production to be the test of national prosperity.

We may regard these three as embodying the Chinese conception of *Min Sheng*, and as the outline of a true democracy. Let us note, for a moment, the implications of each of these provisions.

1. All workers to be part-owners of the industries they work. This implies that there are no employers as distinct from employees. Hence there is no need for arbitration courts, as there are no industrial disputes. The employer-employees settle all differences in regular conferences. Is not this *rhythmic vitality*?

It implies, also, that all capital must belong to the people, to make such a condition workable. Hence the control of capital must not be in the hands of a monopoly, whether that monopoly be a few persons or the State. Chinese philosophers have always emphasized the distinction between the people and the State. Together, then, with the development of these industrial co-operatives, co-operative credit societies and co-operative banks have been developed all throughout the country. These now operate in all the provinces under the direction and control of the Government at Chungking. But something else is implied. We refer to the gradual abolition of the wage system itself. Each worker-owner receives his share from the result of sales. It is not a matter of being paid for services by an employer. It is not payment for labour. The individual receives recompense according to the measure of his co-operative or community effort. Is not this *rhythmic vitality*? This gradual abolition of the wage system may prove to be one of the greatest contributions of China to this modern age.

2. Service rather than profit-making to be the motive of industry. We have noted how, through the centuries, the Chinese seers have protested against this profit-making motive. It has been the greatest hindrance to the full realization of *rhythmic vitality*. This co-operative order substitutes service for profit-making. This service finds concrete expression in the *consumers' co-operatives*, which are the logical adjunct to the *producers' co-operatives*. All differences between costs of production and selling prices of goods return to the community in the form of dividends. Here we see Sun Yat-sen's fundamental principle at work again. Community values must return to the community. But what is this but that principle of *rhythmic vitality* taking economic forms?

3. Consumption and not production to be the test of national prosperity. This follows from the preceding factors, which we have noted. As goods are produced for the service of the community, rather than for the making of profits, consumption naturally becomes the criterion of prosperity. As a result, "poverty in the midst of plenty" could never be possible under such a co-operative order. Hoarding of goods, speculation in prices, and all the racket of modern industrial and commercial juggling are impos-

sible under such a democratic order, where profit-making is impossible, and where the motive of industry is service.

We suggest that this Chinese order deserves the closest attention of all students of social and industrial pathology.

There are various national utilities, which, of course, cannot be treated in this manner. The Chinese Constitution provides for these. Article 123 of the Chinese Constitution states that "*All public utilities and all enterprises of a monopolistic nature shall be operated by the State*". This applies to railways, transport, civil services, &c.

Already the question of rationalization of industry after the war is being faced. Chinese leaders realize that when China has won the war, as she shall win it, then this question of rationalization must be met. As a result, there has been established, at Chengtu, an institute to prepare for this development. This institute has been organized by highly trained experts. Among these are Professor J.B. Taylor, from England; Dr. Lewis Smythe, from Cornell University; Professor Charles Riggs, an American-trained agricultural expert; Dr. Paul Hsu, an authority on banking; Dr. Chao Chi-ming, from the economic department of the Nanking University, and others. We might call this institute the world's first *Co-operative University*, as it will direct all departments of human endeavour according to the principle of co-operation as well as attend to the rationalization of industry in the post-war period.

Are not these things a definite contribution to the democracy of tomorrow? Is it not possible that China, which gave to the world its first university, its first public library, its first printing press, its first compass, and so many other benefits, may now point the way to the full realization of the first real democracy? Many watchers on the hillside think so.

We would emphasize, however, the ethical significance of this co-operative order. It gives the individual full scope for expression and rescues him from becoming just a cog in a vast profit-making industrial machine. It is based on spiritual values. It restores the dignity of man. In the West, the machine has despiritualized man. It has become something of a god. The profit-making motive has taken the place of the moral law. As opposed to this, the Chinese conception of "*Ch'i yun sheng tung*" or *rhythmic vitality* is the closest approach to the Christian ethic in its application to industry that has yet been attempted. It is not without meaning that the leaders of the Chinese co-operative order are ardent Christians. The names of Lu Kuang-mien, Wu Ch'u-fei, Lem Foh-yu, Pei Chung-hsi, Li Tsung-jen and Jen Chu-mien come to the mind at once, in this connexion.

In concluding this Morrison Memorial Lecture, I would make a special application of this truth to Australia. I trust that it will reach the ears of those whose special task it is to plan our post-war reconstruction. Hitherto, we in Australia have approached democracy as merely a polit-

ical or industrial development. We have failed to realize that democracy is a spiritual idea, and that it must have a spiritual inspiration. China has grasped this truth. Her leaders see the Chinese conception of rhythmic vitality as synonymous with the Christian ethic. They see this as the motivating urge in any true democracy. Political and industrial aspects are expressions of an underlying principle, and they can only be truly democratic when that principle is *rhythmic vitality* or the Christian ethic. Is it not significant that the International Committee at Hongkong, which is seeking to interpret the Chinese co-operative order to the world, has as its chairman the Anglican Bishop of Hongkong?

We suggest, then, that Australia should send a mission to China on which would be represented the different sections of our Australian industrial activities. Such a mission would see a democracy being shaped, in which economics and industry are being conducted in obedience to ethical laws. We think that such a mission would learn much that would assist Australia in her great task of post-war reconstruction.

Like most of the other so-called democracies, Australia needs much more moral courage than she has at the moment. We have abundant physical courage. Our fighting qualities are known to the world. But we lack the moral courage to establish an adequate democracy in Australia. We hear much of our post-war aims. As in Britain and America, much is being said and much is being written of the new social order to be established after this war. But have we the moral courage to set up any new order? We put this question to Australia, in this capital city of Canberra this evening: Have we the moral courage to set up any new order? In other words, have we the moral courage to face those powerful ones who place profit-making before service, who would substitute the practice of this profit-making for the moral law? Have we the moral courage to give to the masses their share of ownership in this land and its enterprises? Have we the moral courage to see that the people consume what they produce? Until we have such courage, then it is better for us to keep our hypocrisy to ourselves and cease talking about any new order.

Such a mission to China as we have just suggested would show Australians what it means to apply the moral law to the social order and thus build up a real and efficient democracy on the basis of the Christian ethic. We dare to believe that it is to teach the world this mighty truth that Free China has survived, in spite of terrors and barbarities, compared with which the brutality of Hitlerism is insignificant. We dare to believe and tell Australia to-night that this is China's magnificent contribution to the world of tomorrow.

